

Claims

1. A method of interactively viewing the Earth, the method comprising the steps of:
 - 5 selecting a first satellite viewpoint of a first region of the Earth;
reading a first prestored image of the first region of the Earth from the first satellite viewpoint;
displaying the first prestored image;
 - 10 selecting a first prestored wide-angle image of the first region of the Earth from a first lower-altitude viewpoint in comparison to the first satellite viewpoint;
selecting a portion of the first prestored wide-angle image;
 - 15 displaying the portion of the first prestored wide-angle image;
reading first prestored textual data associated with the first region of the Earth, the first prestored textual data providing at least one of background information and historical information associated with the first region of the Earth;
 - 20 displaying the first prestored textual data;
selecting a first prestored terrestrial image of the first region of the Earth from a terrestrial viewpoint;
 - 25 displaying the first prestored terrestrial image;
selecting a second satellite viewpoint of a second region of the Earth;
 - 30 reading a second prestored image of the second region of the Earth from the second satellite viewpoint;
displaying the second prestored image;
selecting a second prestored wide-angle image of the second region of the Earth from a second lower-

altitude viewpoint in comparison to the second satellite viewpoint;

selecting a portion of the second prestored wide-angle image;

5 displaying the portion of the second prestored wide-angle image;

reading second prestored textual data associated with the second region of the Earth, the second prestored textual data providing at least one of
10 background information and historical information associated with the second region of the Earth;

displaying the second prestored textual data;

selecting a second prestored terrestrial image of the second region of the Earth from a terrestrial
15 viewpoint; and

displaying the second prestored terrestrial image.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first
prestored image, the first prestored wide-angle image,
the first prestored textual data, the first prestored
terrestrial image, the second prestored image, the
5 second prestored wide-angle image, the second prestored
textual data, and the second prestored terrestrial image
are prestored by a compact disk.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the first
10 prestored image is displayed in a first display window
and the first prestored wide-angle image is displayed in
a second display window.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of
15 the first lower-altitude viewpoint and the second lower-
altitude viewpoint includes a viewpoint from an aircraft
in flight.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of
20 the first lower-altitude viewpoint and the second lower-
altitude viewpoint includes a viewpoint from at least
one of a building and a tower.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of
25 the first lower-altitude viewpoint and the second lower-
altitude viewpoint includes at least one of a
terrestrial viewpoint and an undersea viewpoint.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the first
30 prestored wide-angle image is captured by a camera.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the first
prestored wide-angle image includes an aggregation of a
plurality of images.

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9. The method of claim 1 wherein the first prestored image includes a wide-angle image.

5 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the first prestored terrestrial image includes a wide-angle image.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

10 receiving a real-time image of the first region of the Earth from an online service; and

displaying the real-time image of the first region of the Earth.

15 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of displaying the portion of the first prestored wide-angle image includes processing the portion of the first prestored wide-angle image to form a perspective corrected image and displaying the perspective corrected image.

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13. A personal computer system comprising:

a user interface for selecting a first satellite viewpoint of a first region of the Earth, a first prestored wide-angle image of the first region of the Earth from a first lower-altitude viewpoint in comparison to the first satellite viewpoint, a portion of the first prestored wide-angle image, a first prestored terrestrial image of the first region of the Earth from a terrestrial viewpoint, a second satellite viewpoint of a second region of the Earth, a second prestored wide-angle image of the second region of the Earth from a second lower-altitude viewpoint in comparison to the second satellite viewpoint, a portion of the second prestored wide-angle image, and a second prestored terrestrial image of the second region of the Earth from a terrestrial viewpoint;

a compact disk reader in communication with the user interface to read, from a compact disk, a first prestored image of the first region of the Earth from the first satellite viewpoint, first prestored textual data associated with the first region of the Earth, the first prestored textual data providing at least one of background information and historical information associated with the first region of the Earth, a second prestored image of the second region of the Earth from the second satellite viewpoint, and second prestored textual data associated with the second region of the Earth, the second prestored textual data providing at least one of background information and historical information associated with the second region of the Earth; and

a display device which displays the first prestored image, the portion of the first prestored wide-angle image, the first prestored textual data, the first prestored terrestrial image, the second prestored image,

the portion of the second prestored wide-angle image,
the second prestored textual data, and the second
prestored terrestrial image.

the portion of the second prestored wide-angle image,
the second prestored textual data, and the second
prestored terrestrial image.

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18. A compact disk for interactively viewing the Earth, the compact disk storing a first prestored image of a first region of the Earth from a first satellite viewpoint, a first prestored wide-angle image of the first region of the Earth from a first lower-altitude viewpoint in comparison to the first satellite viewpoint, first prestored textual data associated with the first region of the Earth, the first prestored textual data providing at least one of background information and historical information associated with the first region of the Earth, a first prestored terrestrial image of the first region of the Earth from a terrestrial viewpoint, a second prestored image of a second region of the Earth from a second satellite viewpoint, a second prestored wide-angle image of the second region of the Earth from a second lower-altitude viewpoint in comparison to the second satellite viewpoint, second prestored textual data associated with the second region of the Earth, the second prestored textual data providing at least one of background information and historical information associated with the second region of the Earth, and a second prestored terrestrial image of the second region of the Earth from a terrestrial viewpoint.

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prestored wide-angle image is captured by a camera.